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EXAMINER

BRUTUS, JOEL F

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/593,072	Applicant(s) OSHIKI ET AL.	
	Examiner JOEL F. BRUTUS	Art Unit 3768	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 July 2010.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,6-20,23 and 24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,6-10,23 and 24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 3, 6-9, 12-13, 18, 20 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al (US Pat: 6,132,373) stand alone.

Regarding claims 1 and 24, Ito et al teach an apparatus for measuring an intima-media thickness of a blood vessel; a data analyzing device for receiving image data and calculating the intima media thickness of the blood vessel according to the image data [see abstract]; the digital data includes a plurality of luminance values each corresponding to respective one of a plurality of pixels of the image [see abstract].

Ito et al disclose image data composed of m pixels ranging from the first pixel to the m-th pixel is extracted [see column 10 lines 12-15]. Ito et al teach data analyzing device includes a setting device that is capable of setting the tunica intima reference point and the tunica externa reference point [see abstract].

Ito et al disclose a calculation device for detecting maximum value and a minimum value from among the luminance (or brightness, emphasis added) values corresponding to a predetermined number of the pixels; calculating the intima media

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thickness based on the maximum and minimum values [see abstract] of the luminance or brightness values. Ito et al disclose a thickness calculation device that includes one to five detection devices for detecting maximum and minimum values of luminance [see column 3 lines 39-54].

Ito et al teaches in the data analyzing device, a certain part of the image of the blood vessel including parts of the intima, media is extracted as a target part which is a line of pixels extending along the radius of the blood vessel [see column 2 lines 52-57].

Ito et al don't specifically mention a setting range including tunica intima reference point or tunica externa reference point, wherein the brightness belong to the setting range.

However, Ito et al disclose a predetermined range of pixels due to changes in the locations of the inner intimal wall and inner adventitial wall relative to the Z-axis direction are expressed with regression curves $f_i(Z)$ and $f_c(Z)$ in units of a predetermined range of pixels [see column 12 lines 13-19]. Therefore, this teaching shows that Ito et al through its setting, are capable of setting pixel range that belongs to the brightness. So one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to set a brightness pixel range; for accuracy purposes.

Ito et al don't specifically mention distance between boundaries in blood vessel wall.

However, Ito et al teaches calculation device calculates a difference between a value representing the position of an inner intimal wall and a value representing the position of an inner adventitial wall, [see column 4 lines 1-3]. Ito et al further disclose

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measuring border between the intima and media (the outer intimal wall of the inner medial wall), and border between the media and adventitia (outer media wall or the inner adventitial wall) [see column 9 lines 1-5].

Therefore, one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to use the calculating to calculate a distance between the two borders as disclosed above in a region formed by pixels being extracted based on the reference points; for accuracy and precision purposes.

Regarding claim 20, Ito et al disclose IMT values exceeding 1.1 mm may be colored in red and thus distinguished as a domain and an examiner collects IMT value with an evaluation table to be printed out; a line indicating an IMT of 1.1 mm may be drawn as a reference and a domain of IMT values exceeding 1.1 mm may be colored [see column 15 lines 1- 10 and fig 8].

Regarding claims 3, 6-9, 12-13, 18, Ito et al teach the largest peak value is observed at a point indicating a position on the adventitia (lunica externa) and a second peak indicates a position on the intima [see fig 6C and column 9 lines 45-63]; two points Xa and Xb are regarded as points indicating the locations of inner adventitial wall and inner intimal wall [see column 9 lines 55-60].

Plotting points of luminance values observed in the extracted image data, data composed of 50 pixels arranged along the X axis is extracted [see column 10 lines 20-23]; in order words a threshold value range of 50 pixels is extracted. An average value

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of luminance values is calculated in units of 20 pixels from the start position (first pixel and also consider as the reference point) [see fig 6B, column 10 lines 24-27].

Ito et al teach a difference of the latest average value is calculated and determines whether the difference exceeds a predetermined value or fall below [see column 10 lines 28-33]; comparing peak value luminance to determine the locations of intima and externa. The luminance with largest peak value indicates the location of the externa [see column 10 lines 40-60]. The position or a position at which a decrease in the luminance value becomes equal to or smaller than DI [see FIG 9b] indicates the location of intimal wall [see column 11 lines 11-15], a line indicating an IMT of 1.1 mm may be drawn as a reference and a domain of IMT values exceeding 1.1 mm may be colored [see column 15 lines 1- 10].

3. Claims 10-11, 15-17, 19 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al (US Pat: 6,132,373) in view of Ito et al (US Pat: 5,353,220).

Regarding claims 10-11, Ito et al 373" don't mention binarization process.

However, Ito et al 220" teach display data of red and data of blue showing a state of a flow of blood flow with binarization process [see column 3 lines 15-24].

Therefore, one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to combine Ito et al 220" with Ito et al 373" by using binarization process; for accuracy purposes.

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Regarding claims 15 and 23, Ito et al 373" don't specifically disclose three dimensional image data and Doppler imaging.

However, Ito et al 220" disclose a color three dimensional Doppler image data; a flow in a certain blood vessel is adopted as the object [see column 2 lines 55-60], displaying a 3D color Doppler image by respective color reconstructed [see column 3 lines 6-8].

Therefore, one with ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to combine the Two Ito references by using the teachings of Ito et al to obtain the tunica intima; for the purpose of measuring IMT more accurately and easily.

Regarding claims 16-17, Ito et al 373" disclose ultrasonic probe to emit waves to the common carotid that are reflected more greatly from the region of the intima [see column 8 lines 10-16]. The region reflecting ultrasonic more greatly appears as a high-luminance area in an ultrasonic image on the display screen of the ultrasonic apparatus [see column 8 lines 13-15]; a change in luminance is measured in a direction in which a blood vessel is traversed, whereby intima media thickness can be measured [see column 8 lines 17- 20].

Ito et al 373" don't teach an image reconstruction unit.

However, Ito et al 220" disclose extracted profile points are arranged so as to reconstruct three dimensional images [see column 3 lines 1-5].

Therefore, one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to combine Ito et al 373" with Ito et al 220" by using three dimensional; in order to increase visualization.

Regarding claim 19, Ito et al disclose a calculation device for detecting a maximum value and a minimum value from among the luminance values respectively corresponding to a predetermined number of the pixels arranged from the base position toward a position of an outer adventitial wall on the image, and calculating the intima-media thickness on the basis of the maximum value and the minimum value [see abstract].

Ito et al 373" don't mention marking the extracted region on the display unit.

However, Ito et al 220" use different colors to mark a blood parameter in a display screen [see column 1 lines 35-50].

Therefore, one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to combine these references by marking the extracted region; in order to increase visualization.

4. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al (US Pat: 6,132,373) in view of Sano (US Pat: 5,615,680).

Regarding claim 14, Ito et al 373" don't teach a signal processing having a filter.

However, Sano et al teach a low pass filter [see column 6 lines 25-30, lines 50-55] and a signal processor [see column 6 lines 13] and signal processing section [see fig 1].

Therefore, one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to combine these references; for the purpose of eliminating artifacts or noise in the image; thereby enhancing signal to noise ratio.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3, 6-19 and 23-24 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant argues that Ito et al don't set a range for the brightness of pixels to be extracted.

The examiner understands Ito et al don't specifically mention a setting range including tunica intima reference point or tunica externa reference point, wherein the brightness belong to the setting range.

However, Ito et al disclose a predetermined range of pixels due to changes in the locations of the inner intimal wall and inner adventitial wall relative to the Z-axis direction are expressed with regression curves $f_i(Z)$ and $f_c(Z)$ in units of a predetermined range of pixels [see column 12 lines 13-19]. Therefore, this teaching shows that Ito et al through its setting, are capable of setting pixel range that belongs to the brightness. So one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to set a brightness pixel range; for accuracy purposes.

Applicant also argues that Ito et al don't teach calculating distance between boundaries.

However, Ito et al teaches calculation device calculates a difference between a value representing the position of an inner intimal wall and a value representing the position of an inner advential wall, [see column 4 lines 1-3]. Ito et al further disclose measuring border between the intima and media (the outer intimal wall of the inner medial wall), and border between the media and adventitia (outer media wall or the inner adventitial wall) [see column 9 lines 1-5].

Therefore, one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to use the calculating to calculate a distance between the two borders as disclosed above in a region formed by pixels being extracted based on the reference points; for accuracy and precision purposes.

Conclusion

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

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mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOEL F. BRUTUS whose telephone number is (571)270-3847. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM (Off alternative Fri).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Long Le can be reached on (571)272-0823. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/J. F. B./

Examiner, Art Unit 3768

/Tse Chen/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3777